THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) No, Sir. There is no amount lying unused in Employees' Provident Fund Organisation due to being disputed. All Provident Fund monies are invariably invested and held by the Fund on behalf of workers.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Miserable condition of domestic servants

†1809. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that most of the domestic servants are living in a miserable condition;

(b) if so, whether Government would take steps to safeguard the rights of domestic servants;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (d) Attention of the Government has been drawn from time to time to the plight of domestic workers. Such workers form part of the unorganised labour force. There are several social security schemes like: Jan Shree Bima Yojana (Group Insurance), recently launched Universal Health Insurance Scheme (UHIS), Pension Schemes for persons above 55 years of age amongst others also available to the workers engaged in the unorganised sector including domestic workers.

Rate of interest on EPF

1810. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the uncertainty about the rate of interest on EPF deposits has been agitating the mind of the workers;

(b) if so, the steps taken to remove the misgiving and to settle the issues; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the status of the matter at present?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Minimum wages payable to daily wager

1811. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have raised the minimum wage payable to a daily wager by 32 per cent to Rs. 66/- per day;

(b) if so, how far the Consumer Price Index has risen since the minimum wage was fixed last; and

(c) the extent to which the increased cost of living has been neutralized thereby?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (c) In pursuance of the decision taken at tripartite fora of Central Advisory Board constituted under section 8 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 in its meeting held on 27th June, 2002, the Government set up a Working Group to go into the codification of the concept of Minimum Wages, Listing out Guidelines based on Critical Evaluation of various parameters and also to study the problems in implementation of minimum wages. It has recommended the norms in terms of 3 consumption units and per capita requirement of food, clothing, fuel, lighting and miscellaneous items including children's education, medical requirement etc. as determined by the results of quinquennial Consumer Expenditure Survey for Rural Areas conducted by National Sample Survey Organization. Based on these norms the Working Group worked out afresh the national minimum wage at Rs. 66/- per day to be made applicable to unskilled labour in respect of each employment. No decision has yet been taken by the Government regarding acceptance of the report of the Working Group.

The national minimum wage of Rs. 66/- per day as worked at by the Working Group would be higher by 32 per cent from the present level of Rs. 50/- per day revised with effect from 01.09.2002. In comparison to this, the Consumer Price Index number for Industrial Workers